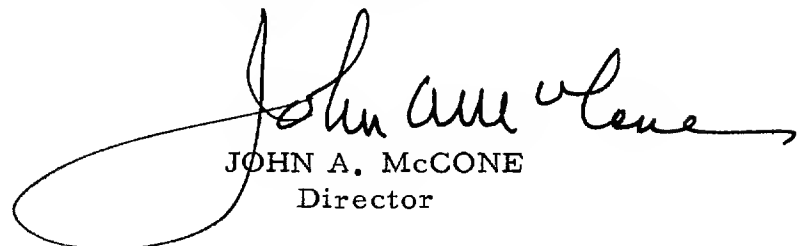


11 April 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Marshall S. Carter

1. Attached is a copy of a confidential memorandum that I have written on the Future Reconnaissance Operations.
2. The reasons for my raising the questions posed in this memorandum and establishing a requirement for a study as proposed are outlined in the closing paragraphs of the memorandum.
3. I would like your recommendations concerning the membership of the panel and the time required for such a study and report. This latter question will be controlled to some extent by work which has been done to date in this area, all of which can be made available to the panel.
4. It is my opinion that the panel should be chaired by someone outside of government, that members should be drawn from CIA, Department of Defense, NPIC and NASA and from the outside as well. Appropriate facilities and staff support should be provided principally by CIA, but by the other agencies as well.
5. If you have views to the contrary with respect to the composition of the panel, I hope you will discuss your views with me immediately. Frankly I am afraid that if this panel is chaired by CIA, parallel studies might be initiated in DOD.
6. It is my intention to discuss this matter with Secretaries McNamara and Gilpatric at the first opportunity.

  
JOHN A. McCONE  
Director

Attachment

NRO review(s) completed.

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11 April 1963

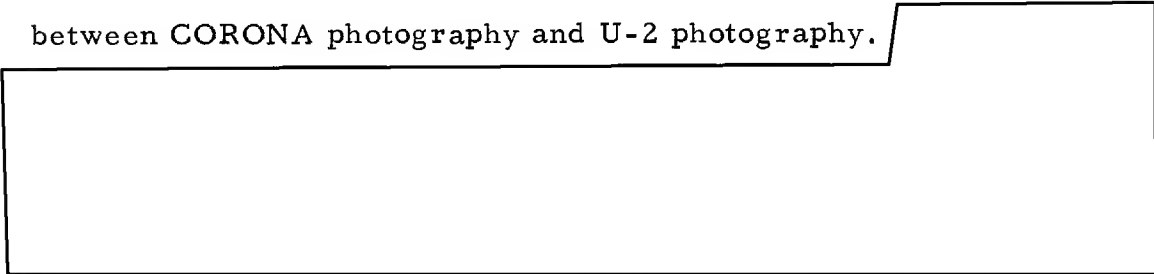
## FUTURE RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS

We are on the threshold of bringing into being developments which will provide substantial improvements in our reconnaissance capability in the following areas:

- a. Manned aircraft -- the A-12 or OXCART will be a vast improvement over the U-2 with respect to speed and altitude capabilities. Camera improvement insures resulting photography of higher resolution than U-2 photography.
- b. Drones: One type of drone capable of carrying a U-2 type of camera is now in existence and operational. A new drone to be launched from an A-12 and with flight characteristics similar to the A-12 is under active development and will be available in about 18 months.

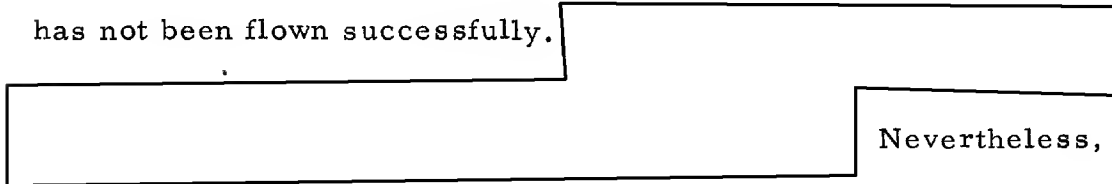
c. Satellites: The CORONA operates satisfactorily; resolution of the photography leaves much to be desired. The LANYARD is operational and should produce photography mid-way between CORONA photography and U-2 photography.

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It is to be noted that the LANYARD - while ready - has not been flown successfully.

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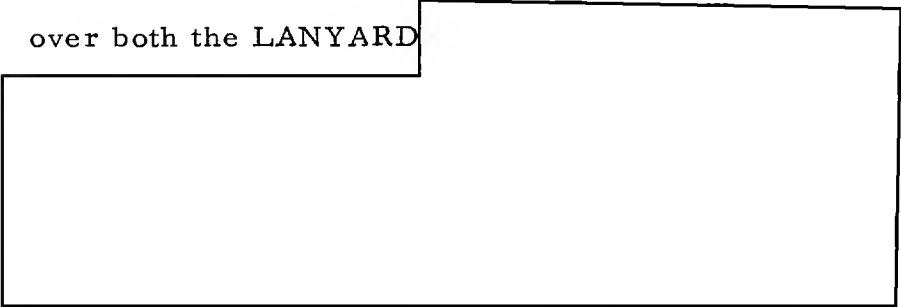


Nevertheless,

the outlook for substantial improvements in satellite photography are sufficiently promising to raise the following questions in my mind:

1. Will the improved photographic satellites produce reconnaissance photography adequate to meet our needs?

2. What further developments are considered feasible and should be undertaken in the interests of developing a system which would be an improvement over both the LANYARD



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3. What is the vulnerability of the satellite and what steps are being taken to protect it?

4. What are the applications of A-12 drones, what quality photography is expected from them, and would their operating characteristics be such as to provide useful coverage in areas important to the security of the United States?

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These questions are raised because of doubt in the minds of some as to the political realities of A-12 manned aircraft flights over the Soviet Union. It is apparent now that such flights would be detected; they would create international incidents of such serious consequences, they might be vulnerable to ground interception, and most certainly would be vulnerable to malfunctioning while over enemy territory.

There is a strong possibility that international political consideration would militate against the use of the OXCART over the Soviet Union and this raises the question of alternative means of securing photographic intelligence, the principal source of which would be improved satellite photography.

Because of understandable policy questions relating to the use of the A-12 over Soviet territory I, as Director of Central Intelligence, must seek a considered answer to the above questions

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and to do this wish to empanel a small group of the most knowledgeable people both from within the government and from the outside, who are versed in the disciplines which control the answers to the above questions and to seek from them a report on the feasibility of improving the quality and resolution of satellite photography, the immediate steps that we should take to reach the ultimate goal, and finally the security of our satellites against interception by the Soviets.

An important part of this study will be a judgment as to just what resolution of photography is necessary to provide meaningful intelligence and a precise determination of the resolution now attained in the U-2 photography, the expected resolution from the A-12 and the probable resolution obtainable from presently programmed satellite photography, and finally from feasible improvements in satellite photography.

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